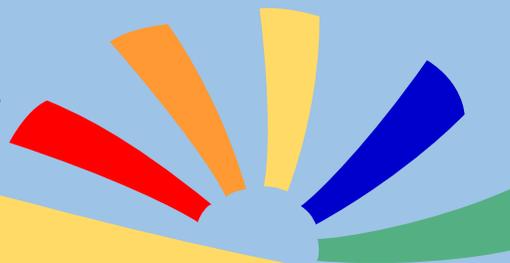


LitRAG

Literacy Rotarian Action Group Newsletter



August 2018



Community Penpals

Recently, the Rotary Club of Welland, Ontario, Canada began a new penpal program which involves the St. Mary School's **EarlyAct Club**, a special group of elementary students from ages 5 to 13.

The program is designed to develop literacy skills through meaningful communication. The task is for students to write letters to specific residents at a local seniors' home. The letters are hand-delivered to the school and the residence by a Rotarian once a week.



This initiative offers opportunities to reduce the generation gap and encourage young people's interaction with seniors. It also encourages the recognition of the dignity and worth of each individual which, in turn, builds respect for others. As well, it enhances literacy development



and a sense of community involvement.

The students write about events in their lives and their aspirations for the future. The senior residents respond to their penpal commenting on their hopes by describing events from their past, what they have accomplished in their careers and roles and what they hope to do in their future. The stories that the residents recount about their past and their day-to-day lives help this new generation to relate to them as people who have lived lives with experiences, joys and hardships that the students may not have been aware of before.

A goal of the EarlyAct Club is to engage students in character-building activities and prepare them for leadership roles through which they can identify and

carry out projects that benefit their school, local and global communities.

With involvement from other Welland Club Rotarians, it is hoped to expand this worthy program to the other schools throughout the city.

Is this a literacy project that might suit your club?

Literacy Manual for Older Adults

*Have you thought of creating **A Literacy Manual for Older Adults** in your community as a club literacy project?*



When we hear the term 'lifelong learning', it suggests that people can improve their literacy skills at any age. Such literacy skills

would include the ability to understand and use printed information in daily activities whether in the home or in the community. It especially includes the skills of reading in digital environments.

For such a project, you could seek the advice of adult literacy educators, professional dietitians, pharmacists and geriatric specialists to support you.

On an international level, there are three adult literacy surveys, the [Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey](#) (ALL), the [International Adult Literacy Survey](#) (IALS), and the OECD's [Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies](#) (PIAAC) which is currently in progress. Data from ALL and IALS reveal that low skills are commonly found in first world countries and that these low skills pose problems for individuals trying to cope with work and life in modern societies where the demands for a broad range of literacy skills are increasing.

Website: www.litrag.org

Facebook: facebook.com/reading.rotary

Contact John Thorne or Carolyn Johnson:
info@litrag.org

In PIAAC, "Literacy is defined as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society".

An IAA survey found that over 70 percent of Canadian seniors have difficulty with reading and writing skills. Researchers say that this may be due to the fact that many older adults left school early or that reading skills are lost over time if not practiced. This can seriously compromise their health and well-being due to their inability to obtain health information, as well as not understanding instructions.

Some other studies have shown that seniors with low literacy skills are admitted to hospitals more often than those with reading skills, they tend to stay longer and are more likely to suffer from mental health problems.

What are you inspired to do about developing self-esteem in adults in your community?

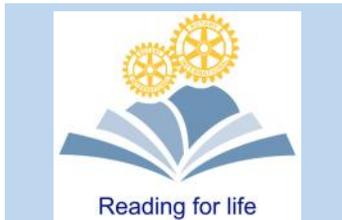


What Good is a Book?

I don't believe in the kind of magic in my books. But I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book.
~ J. K. Rowling

A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.
~ Chinese Proverb

There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island.
~ Walt Disney



Always read something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
~ P.J. O'Rourke

There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all.
~ Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

You cannot open a book without learning something.
~ Confucius

A writer only begins a book, it is the reader who completes it; for the reader takes up where the writer left off as new thoughts stir within him.
~ David Harris Russell

LitRAG Awards 2018

An award of US\$500 will be made to each of two clubs which best celebrate **Rotary Basic Education and Literacy Month in September 2018** and/or **International Literacy Day on 8 September 2018.**

Here are a few suggestions for consideration:

- organise a writing competition for children in your local school(s)
- run a spelling contest for children in your local school(s)
- hold a poetry festival
- donate books/dictionaries and maximize local publicity for their presentation
- obtain publicity for your *Basic Education and Literacy* projects
- promote your club *Basic Education and Literacy* projects on social media
- arrange for a limerick competition on social media
- recruit an educator to your club
- run a Literacy Seminar for clubs in your local area
- get Interactors involved in establishing a local literacy project
- work with Rotaractors to help with an adult literacy project
- establish a project to get club members and friends to listen regularly to children reading in schools
- visit a local prison and work out a plan to help inmates improve their reading and writing skills
- run a Project Fair and invite other reading charities/organisations to be involved
- cooperate with the *International Reading Association* in a joint project
- send an article about your project(s) for publication in the LitRAG newsletter.

Details:

- **Use the LitRAG Literacy Grant Application Form available from rotary.tas@gmail.com for your entry.**
- Tell LitRAG how your club would use the US\$500 if successful.
- The **closing date** for receipt of your club entry is 15 October 2018. No late entries accepted.
- Email your application form, supported by documents and photographs, to LitRAG: rotary.tas@gmail.com

LITERACY in a BOX

As a Rotary-derived and approved charity, **Literacy in a Box** understands the need to access schools to offer literacy programs that support their curriculum, such as RotaKids and Interact.

With the kind support of dedicated Rotarians, we continue to help thousands of children with their education and hope we can count on your ongoing support.



Literacy in a Box resource materials available:

- A delightful, revised brochure - please use this [brochure link](#) to view or contact us for copies.
- Our [School Video](#) or [Information Video](#) are available through download or hardcopy DVD.
- ['The Story of the Red and Blue Box'](#) is a Power-Point presentation for UK schools.
- Access to the ['Thank you' video](#) for download and use in Clubs or schools.
- 'Chat time' with us on how to work with schools or set up RotaKids or Interact clubs.

If you would like any of the above materials or to discuss supporting **Literacy in a Box**, please contact: phone: 017 5278 4540 (landline) or 079 811 480 89 (mobile) or email: info@literacyboxtrust.org.uk

For general information on our work, please visit our website: literacyboxtrust.org.uk

Please don't hesitate to contact Literacy in a Box with any query.

Ian Parker (Chairman)

Why Bother with Manners?

Having good manners will give a person confidence as it means **knowing how to act in a manner that is socially acceptable and respectful.**

Excellent manners can help you to have better relationships with people you know and those you will meet or encounter whether in your Rotary Club, in the workplace or in society in general.

The Kindle eBook, [Good Manners in Rotary](#), is a concise, clear guide and strong model for Rotarians to develop their social prowess, awareness and skills. It provides the essentials of sound protocol and etiquette with hints on being business-like in Rotary, leading to more effective meetings and interactions. By drawing on a strong skill set of good manners will make any employee more effective in the workplace and therefore the workplace itself will become more productive.

The first version of this guide was written in 2004 and following four sell-out paper editions, has been reworked as a digital edition – expanded and enhanced to meet the needs of current social issues.

The cost of about \$3 is minimal and **all proceeds go to The Rotary Foundation.**



Good Manners in Rotary



Educate a Girl and Change a Generation

"We cannot keep letting gender inequality get in the way of global progress," said World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva. "Inequality in education is yet another fixable issue that is costing the world trillions. It is time to close the gender gap in education and give girls and boys an equal chance to succeed, for the good of everyone."



THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA

The World Bank reports that:

Globally, nine in ten girls complete their primary education, but only three in four complete their lower secondary education (roughly 9 years of educ-

ation). **In low income countries**, less than two thirds of girls complete their primary education, and **only one in three completes lower secondary school**.

Girls who complete secondary school are better equipped to become healthier, more prosperous adults, with smaller families and children who are less at risk of illness and death and more likely to succeed. Further, girls with a secondary education are more likely to participate in the labor force as adults and be decision makers at home and in their communities.

Earnings and standards of living: If every girl worldwide received 12 years of quality education, lifetime earnings for women could increase by \$15 trillion to \$30 trillion globally. Women with primary education only earn 14 percent to 19 percent more than women with no education at all, but those with secondary education earn almost twice as much.

Child marriage and early childbearing: Universal secondary education for girls could virtually eliminate child marriage (entering in a union before the age of 18) and holds the potential to reduce by 75 percent the risk of early childbearing for women (having a first child before the age of 18).

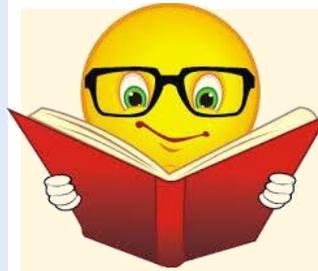
Fertility and population growth: Universal secondary education for girls could contribute to reduced total fertility rates by one third in high fertility countries, and to increased contraceptive use by one fourth in those countries. It may also contribute to a reduction in global population growth by 0.3 percentage point. The reduction in population growth could generate \$3 trillion in benefits per year, cumulative over time.

Health, nutrition and well-being: In developing countries, universal secondary education for girls could increase women's knowledge of HIV/AIDS and empower them to make decisions about their own healthcare. It could also improve their sense of psychological well-being, reduce the risk of intimate partner violence, and reduce the risk of under-five mortality and malnutrition among their children.

Agency and decision-making: Universal secondary education for girls could contribute to increasing by one tenth women's decision-making within their household, and by one fifth the likelihood of birth registration for their children.

Social capital and institutions: Universal secondary education for girls could enable them to engage as adults in more altruistic behaviors and it could increase their ability to rely on friends when in need.

For more information about the report, [click here](#).



Rotarians, Please Support Reading!

Rotary International has six areas of focus and literacy is one of those.

Your local club and its members share your concerns about literacy – about getting children to discover the magic of reading. Many clubs donate books and dictionaries to local schools. Why not newspapers?

For the cost of a book, a Rotarian in the USA can offer a child a newspaper-a-week. And, when your paper includes the weekly *Kid Scoop* page, children can open up and read the paper with enthusiasm. Even better, when kids read a newspaper once a week or more, reading test scores go up an average of 10%!

We are all aware that improving childhood literacy as it increases the odds of a child's success later in life. Cathy Farley, a Rotarian and a librarian in Sparta, Tennessee, convinced her local newspaper to run [Kid Scoop](#) to build a local literacy program to get children (also referred to as 'kids' in the USA) excited about reading.

When Cathy heard Vicki Whiting, the creator of *Kid Scoop*, speak at the 2017 Atlanta Convention about the value of community-based literacy partnerships, she knew that a local newspaper was the 'missing piece' to getting children excited about reading. Vicki's speech inspired her to form a partnership between a local newspaper, Rotary Club, public library and the school system.

She approached the publisher of the local newspaper and explained her plan to bring *Kid Scoop* in to jumpstart children's excitement about reading and start meeting the community's 3rd Grade literacy proficiency goals. The steps were start running *Kid Scoop* weekly in the newspaper have the paper delivered to elementary schools in the district supply the paper (containing *Kid Scoop*) to families with

“I don't mind if I have to sit on the floor at school. All I want is education. And I'm afraid of no one.”
Malala Yousafzai

children at well-attended Summer Reading Events find the community partners to fund the program.

“When Cathy approached us with Kid Scoop, we knew it was something big. She has a close connection with the children in our community by working in the library, and her excitement about the program convinced us to start running it and having it delivered to our elementary schools. It’s been a great decision.” — Jim Shanks, publisher, The Expositor newspaper



“The Rotary Club of Sparta decided to write a district grant to fund this project because of its close connection to literacy. We needed a community partner to qualify for the grant, so the library partnered. It was just a natural fit.”

“We started in April, with The Expositor printing Kid Scoop every Monday and getting it out to children in our elementary schools. Now that school is out, we’re sending it to our summer reading programs and we print out extra copies for after-school programs.”



Cathy also hands out copies of *Kid Scoop* at each summer holiday reading activity and gives away literacy-focused ‘prizes’ for children meeting their reading goals. Cathy also uses social media to help local children become engaged in the Summer Reading Program.

During the summer months, children will become familiar with their local newspaper and *Kid Scoop* through their Summer Reading Program. When school is back in session, the program will kick into high gear by providing newspapers in their classrooms. She says students look forward to each new issue, as do the teachers and school librarians.

Kid Scoop is proving to be a turn-key solution across the board: for newspapers, the page pdf is simple to drop into the paper’s layout and helps to engage the community’s future subscribers; for teachers, it meets curriculum standards highlighted in every issue and has lesson plans included; and for libraries, it provides an incentive for children to start reading and broadening their awareness of the world around them.

There are eager, resourceful partners like Cathy in every community across the nation. Groups and individuals who want better outcomes for their community are natural partners for newspapers. In Cathy’s case, it was the literacy-focused local Rotary Club and public library.



Who are the literacy leaders in your Club and your community just looking for an effective program like *Kid Scoop* to get behind?

Toronto Rotary International Convention 2018 – LitRAG is Gaining Strength! reports LitRAG Vice-Chair Carolyn Johnson

LitRAG had an active presence in Toronto sharing a message of active engagement in a wide variety of literacy activities, both locally and internationally. Our booth in the House of Friendship was busy throughout the convention, sharing ideas and promoting efforts of Rotarians in supporting basic education and literacy projects. **More than 200 Rotarians from across the Rotary world signed up** to become involved in LitRAG.

Great thanks to Brenda Ericsson, Peter Johnson, Carolyn Johnson, Vicki Whiting, Anand Seth, Sue Bellor, Ann Grahame - and several others - for spending time at the booth talking with interested Rotarians and sharing



Above: LitRAG members share information, ideas and enthusiasm at the LitRAG display at the Rotary International 2018 Convention Toronto.

ideas of ways that we can promote literacy.

LitRAG and the Fellowship of Rotarian Educators mingled at a 'get to know you' social - a first for the two groups to get together. We have common interests in supporting effective education programs through Rotary connections. It would be wonderful if more opportunities for collaboration between educators of the Action Group and the Fellowship could be held.

The **LitRAG Annual Meeting** welcomed 24 members - the largest gathering in several years! We welcomed new board members Anand Seth (USA) and Courtney Doldron (Canada), current board members Chehab Elawar (USA), Carolyn Johnson (Vice-Chair - USA) and advisor Bill Stumbaugh (Ecuador). A variety of topics was discussed - with all in agreement that we need to be more pro-active in our outreach so that members become more connected and aware of effective literacy and education projects.

LitRAG is sponsoring a **contest** (- see p. 2 above) to coincide with Literacy Month (September) for members to share their story and a few photos of projects to promote Rotarian involvement in literacy/education.

Members would like to establish a database of members with expertise in specific areas of education who could be called on for support and resources. We would also like to develop a database of successful projects that could be shared with members.

Needs for LitRAG include more stories about club projects to share in the newsletter and on the website. The website is being re-developed - expertise in managing the website is needed to keep it current and relevant.

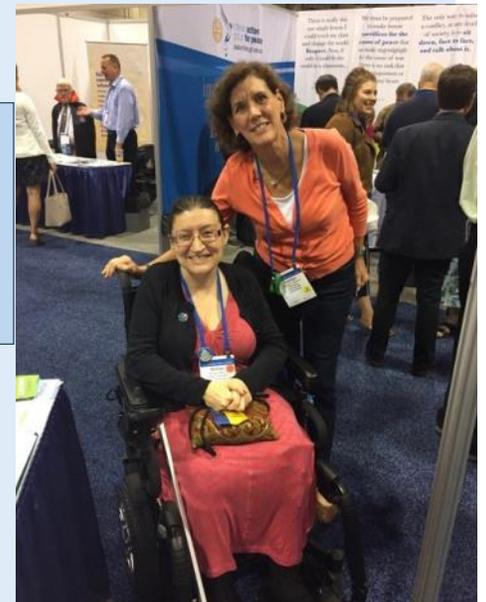
The Literacy Rotarian Action Group is a recognised Rotarian Action Group and operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is neither an agency of nor controlled by Rotary International.

Attendees were asked to share benchmarks of success that we should work toward in the 2018–19 Rotary year. **Goals include:**

- ◆ LitRAG Facebook page working and active
- ◆ LitRAG website revised and up-to-date
- ◆ List of successful projects from The Rotary Foundation (as a resource for members)
- ◆ Increased number of contributions about current Basic Education and Literacy (BEL) projects from members for the LitRAG newsletter
- ◆ Identification of literacy coordinators in each zone to promote literacy projects.

LitRAG will definitely be applying for booth space at the Hamburg Convention from 1–5 June 2019.

Right: LitRAG Vice-Chair Carolyn Johnson with Communications and Outreach Specialist Denise DiNoto (seated) who enjoyed visiting the LitRAG display.



LitRAG Office-Bearers

LitRAG Executive Committee:

- Chair: John Thorne, PRID (Australia)
- Vice-Chair: Carolyn Johnson, PDG (USA)
- Secretary: (position vacant)
- Treasurer: Harvey Baxter, Rotarian (USA)

LitRAG Directors:

- Rodolfo Bianchi, PDG (Guatemala)
- Sylvia Byers, PDG (Australia)
- Chehab Elawar, PDG (USA)
- David Fowler, Past President RIBI (England)
- Shekhar Mehta, PRID (India)
- Anand Seth, Rotarian (USA)
- Courtney Doldron, Rotarian (Canada)

LitRAG Advisors to the Board:

- Bill Boyd, Past RI President (New Zealand)
- Noraseth Pathmanand, PRID (Thailand)
- William Stumbaugh, Rotarian (Ecuador)